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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *September* the 6th, 1753.

I WAS formerly acquainted with a very honeſt old gentleman, who as often as he was aſked at the tavern how his wife did, never failed to aſſure us, "that he did not come abroad "to be put in mind of his wife." I could wiſh with all my heart that thoſe perſons who are married to the town for at leaſt eight months in the year, would upon their removal into the country, forget the amuſements of it, and attach themſelves to thoſe pleaſures which are to be found in groves and gardens, in exerciſe and temperance. But as fond as we

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are of variety, and as pleaſing as the changes of the ſeaſons are generally acknowledged to be, it is obſervable that in all the large villages near London, the ſummer ſeems only to be endured, as it is made to reſemble the winter in town. Routs, viſits, aſſemblies, and meetings for drinking, are all the pleaſures that are attended to; while the meadows and corn-fields

(Where the milkmaid ſingeth blithe,
And the mower whets his ſcythe)

are neglected and deſpiſed.

I HAVE received a letter upon this ſubject which for it's candour and good ſenſe, I ſhall lay before my readers, for the ſpeculation of to-day.

TO MR. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

IN this ſeaſon of univerſal migration, when the fire-works of Marybone, and the tin-works of Vauxhall are deſerted for the ſalutary ſprings of Tunbridge, Cheltenham and Scarborough; it would not be amiſs, methinks, if you were to give us your opinion of thoſe ſeats of idleneſs and pleaſure, health and gaiety. Or ſuppoſe you ſhould extend your views ſtill farther, and tell us what you think in general of ſummer amuſements, and the faſhionable employments of rural life? To ſupply in ſome meaſure this defect, give me leave to acquaint you with the principal occurrences that engaged my attention very lately, in a ten day's retirement in the country.

As the friend I viſited was a man who had ſeen much of the world; as his wife and daughters were adorned with

with all the accompliſhments of genteel life; and as they were no leſs admired for their underſtandings than their perſons; my expectation was raiſed and flattered with the pleaſing, yet reaſonable thought, of paſſing my time with no leſs improvement than delight, in a ſituation where art and nature conſpired to indulge my utmoſt wiſhes. But how grievouſly diſappointed was I to find, that whenever I walked out I muſt walk alone; and even then was ſure to be reproached; in the afternoon, for riſing before the bottle was out; and in the evening, for breaking a ſet at cards! The former part of my conduct diſobliged the men, and the latter offended the ladies. Scarce could I reach the end of the avenue before my friend, with a gentle rebuke, ſummoned me back to give a toaſt; and hardly could I contemplate the view from the terraſs, before miſs Kitty would come running to tell me that the RUBBERS was UP, and that it was my turn to CUT IN. This, I doubt, is too general a complaint to be ſoon redreſſed; yet it is not leſs a grievance. That perſons ſo well qualified for giving and receiving the pleaſures of converſation, ſhould thus agree to baniſh thought (at leaſt, all ſubjects that are worth the thinking of) muſt be almoſt incredible to thoſe who are unacquainted with polite life. That a ſeaſon, in which all the beauties of nature appear to ſuch advantage, ſhould be thus thrown away, and as much diſregarded as the depth of winter, ſeems utterly inexcuſable, and in ſome degree immoral. "How, "thought I to myſelf, can talents deſigned for the no- "bleſt purpoſes be thus perverted to the meaneſt? Is "it the ſole province of wit to give toaſts, and of beauty "to ſhuffle cards? How are the faculties of reaſon ſuſ- "pended, while thoſe of paſſion alone prevail! Since

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" it is no leſs certain that the ſweeteſt temper may be " deſtroyed by cards, than that the beſt conſtitution " may be ruined by wine." Theſe were my uſual reflections as I returned to my company, chagrined and diſappointed at the loſs of a walk, which though a ſolitary one, I ſhould always prefer to the pleaſures of the bottle, or a party of Whiſt by daylight, in the beſt aſſembly in England.

Be ſo good, Mr. Fitz Adam, as to eſpouſe the cauſe of injured nature, and remonſtrate loudly againſt this enormous barbarity of killing the ſummer. Let cards prevail in the winter, and in cities only: too much of them do we ſee in this great town to deſire them elſewhere. Let drinking be confined to election dinners, and corporation feaſts, and not continue (as it too much does) imperceptibly to make havock of our private families. Aſſure the ladies, the young ones I mean, that however their mothers may inſtruct them by example, or whatever they themſelves may think, anxiety and diſappointment, hope and fear, are no improvers of their beauty: that Venus never kept her court at a rout; and that the arrows of Cupid are not winged with cards. Let them take but one walk, and the milkmaid that gives them a ſillabub at the end of it, will convince them that air and exerciſe are the true preſervatives of health and beauty, and will add more lively bloom and freſher roſes to their cheeks, than all the *rouge* of French art, or all the fluſh of Engliſh avarice. Inform the men, if they know it not already, that though they may eſteem themſelves ſober when they are not dead drunk, and poſſibly may never be in a ſtate of intoxication, yet drinking to any degree of exceſs, will certainly hurt, if not totally ruin their conſtitutions, and

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be the ſure, though, perhaps, ſlow occaſion of rheumatiſms, gouts, dropſies and death itſelf. Many inſtances of this will occur in the ſphere of every one's acquaintance; and if ſome of the deceaſed have lived fifty or ſixty years, it is hardly to be doubted, that had this barbarous cuſtom never prevailed, their lives might have been extended to at leaſt ſeventy or eighty.

In ſhort, while theſe practices continue, by which every rural delight is entirely loſt, country ſeats may be eſteemed an idle expence, and an uſeleſs burthen. London is certainly the fitteſt place for either the bottle or cards: it is there that the gentlemen may purſue the one, and the ladies the other, without being interrupted by ſuch troubleſome gueſts as myſelf, who may be now and then deſirous of picking a noſegay, or liſtening to the nightingale. For in vain does nature laviſh her charms, if they are thus neglected; in vain do the birds ſing if no one hears them, and in vain do the flowers blow, if

——————they blow unſeen,
And waſte their ſweetneſs on the deſart air.

But if theſe polite perſons will continue to reſide in the ſummer at their country ſeats, merely becauſe it is the faſhion, it would be no unfriendly office to ſpare them the mortification of continually gazing upon unwelcome objects. In order therefore to fix their attention to the moſt important concerns, I would humbly propoſe (and I doubt not but the propoſal will meet with their approbation) that immediately after dinner the windows be cloſed, and the light of the ſun exchanged for that of wax candles; by which means the gentlemen over their bottle in one room, may uninterruptedly